

SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION OF CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHTS

Results of a Survey

Conducted by

THE PURDUE OPINION PANEL

Division of Educational Reference

Purdue University

Lafayette, Indiana

June 1953

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REPORT OF THE PURDUE OPINION PANEL SURVEY  
ON SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION  
OF CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHTS

by H. H. Remmers, R. E. Mainer  
and R. E. Horton

1. Procedure and Sampling

On May 11, 1953, a mailing of 100,000 double cards was made to television set owners in the Chicago-Milwaukee area. The postcards asked two questions:

1. Are you a fight fan? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
2. If a pay-as-you-see television system were in operation, would you pay \$1.00 to see a championship fight on television in your Home? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Sample copies of the post card are included in the appendix to this report. The return portion of the card was addressed to the Purdue Opinion Panel and carried a postal permit return, which did not require the respondent to supply a stamp.

The cards were addressed using the mailing lists of the TV Guide. Using this source for the sample of set owners may introduce some bias if we wish to generalize about all set owners in this area, but the writers of this report are unable to determine the extent and kind of bias, if any, since information is not available concerning this problem.

The cards were mailed four days prior to the Marciano-Walcott fight for the heavyweight title (television coverage of this fight was "blackout" in the Chicago-Milwaukee area).

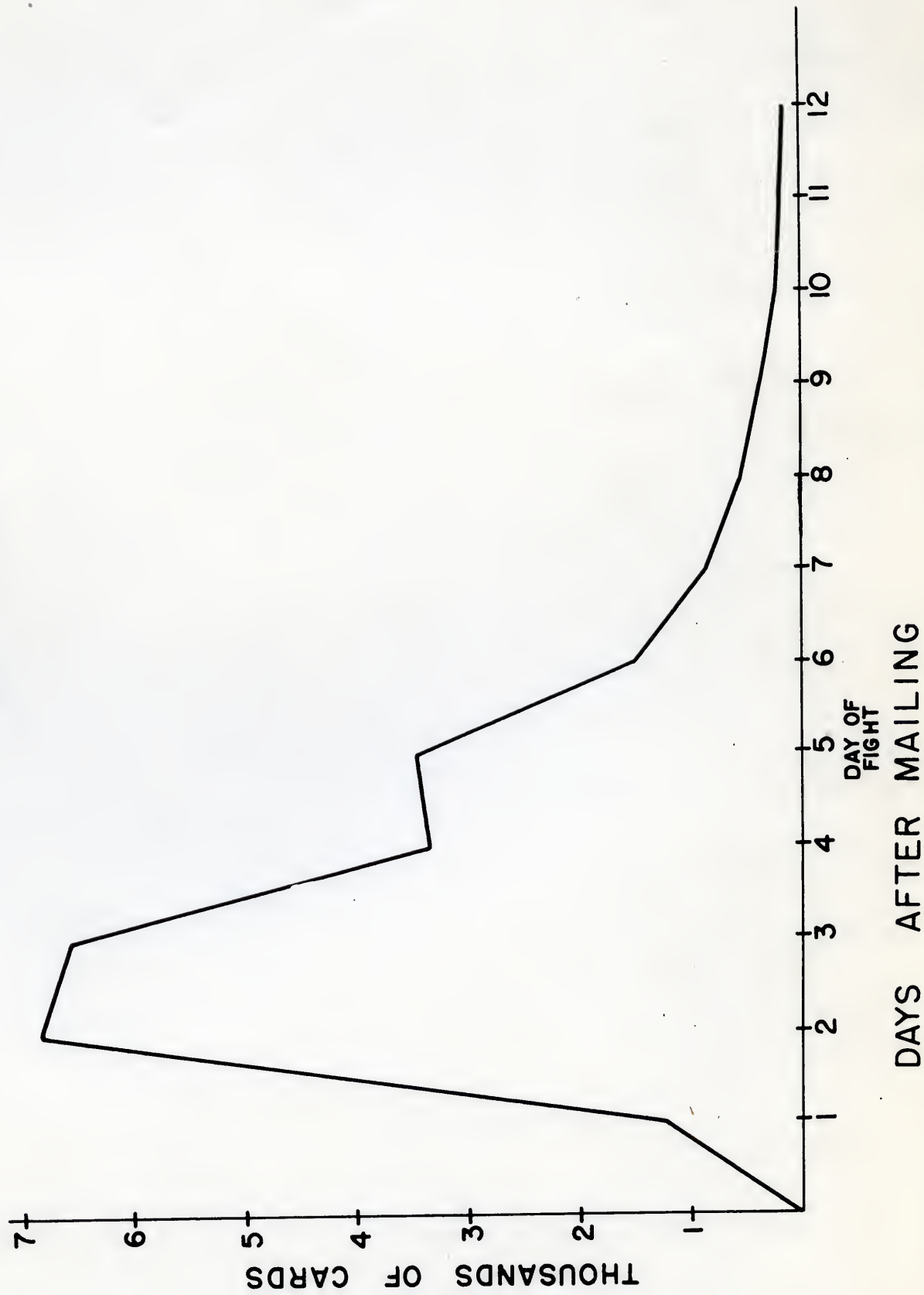
2. Analysis of Results

Figure 1 shows the return of postcards for the days from May 12 to May 30. By the end of the month, the number of cards received daily had diminished to only a few a day; and as of May 30, the grand total of cards received was 25,847. Of this number, 178 cards were not included in the analysis because one or both questions were not answered. This relatively high rate of return, compared to the usual mail survey, seems to indicate considerable interest in subscription television of championship fights and other events.

Each day that cards were received, the responses were compiled and tabulated, so that a day-by-day account of trends in the responses was available. Figure 2 shows the day-by-day results. (In the last days of returns, the figures for several successive days were combined, since the number of cards was so small as to yield unstable and unreliable figures.)

In looking at Figure 2, it is interesting to note the relatively high stability of the percentages until the date of the fight; the first cards received after the fight showed a significant increase in interest, and then after a few days dropped back to the previous level. The slight fluctuations after May 9, are not statistically significant and may be taken as chance variations, for the number of cards received after this day is so small as to provide an unreliable basis for generalization. The Table on page 7 gives the exact figures for these returns.

**FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF CARDS RETURNED  
EACH DAY**



# FIGURE 2. TRENDS IN DAILY RESPONSE

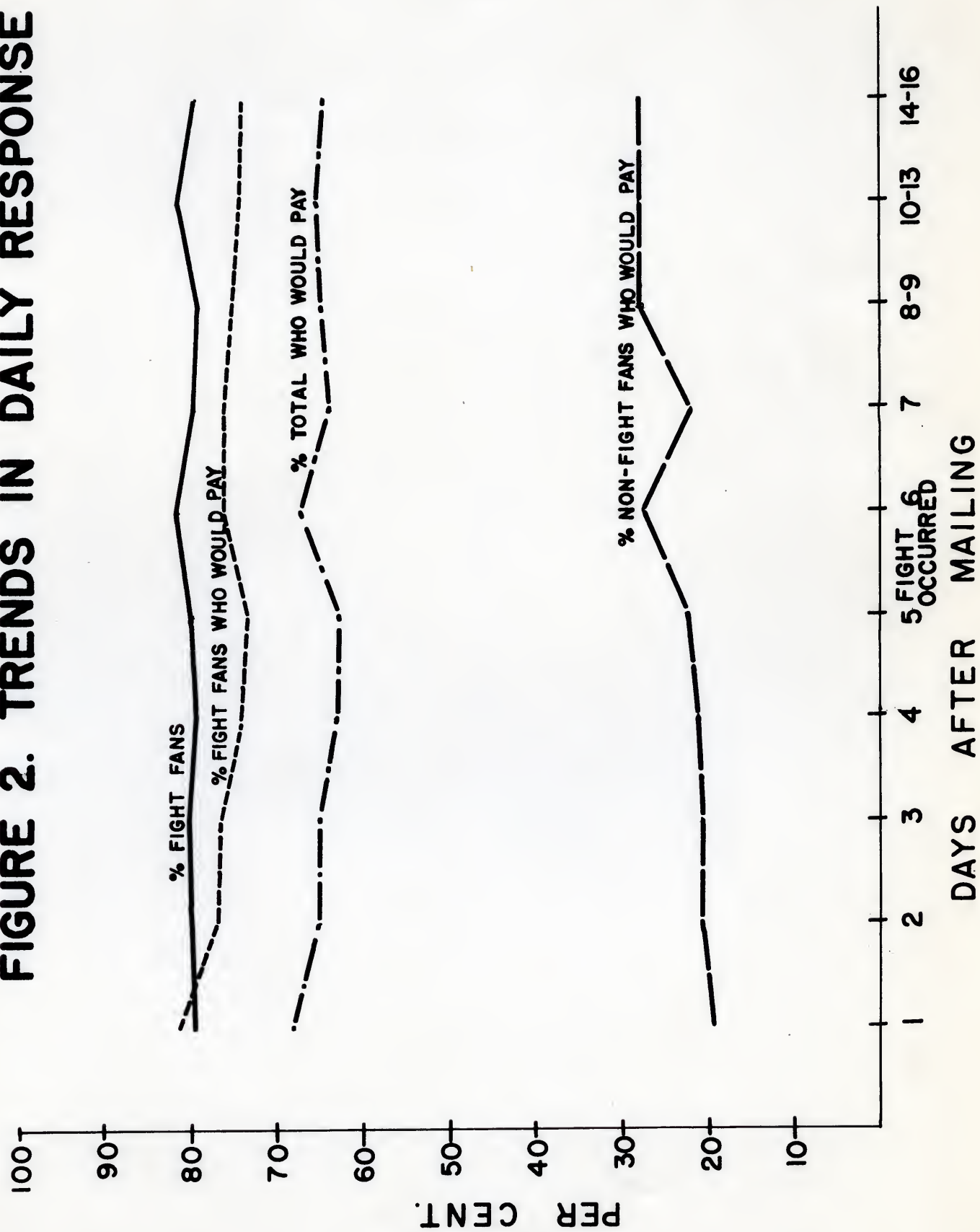




Figure 3 shows the percentages in each answer category when the total number of cards is used for the calculation of the cumulative percentages.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. These figures (Figure 3) are based upon 26,000 cards received out of 100,000 mailed. This 26% return means that we cannot be certain how the entire population of set owners would respond to these questions. In comparison with previous studies, the proportion in this survey willing to pay \$1.00 to see an event on television seems somewhat high; the previous studies indicated between 40% and 50% willing to pay (depending upon the nature of the event in question). We know from other studies that fight fans would be more interested and more highly motivated to return postcards dealing with championship fights, than would non-fight fans. Thus the group of persons who did not return the cards undoubtedly contains a smaller proportion willing to pay to see a championship fight.

### 3. Analysis by Area

After most of the cards had been received, an analysis by area based upon postmark was carried out. Rather than sort and count the entire group of 25,000 cards, a sample of 3,000 was randomly selected from the total returns. Since the analysis by area is based upon postmark appearing on the card, it may be somewhat unreliable due to commuters and others mailing the postcards at postoffices distant from their homes.

For purposes of this analysis, "Chicago area" is defined as including all postoffices within a 35 mile radius of the Chicago Loop. "Milwaukee area" includes all postoffices within a 35 mile radius of downtown Milwaukee; and the "Fringe area" includes postoffices from all other parts of northern Illinois, northern Indiana, southern Michigan, and southern Wisconsin. The "Other" category includes cards mailed from postoffices not within the receiving range of the stations concerned, such as the few cards received from New York City, Tulsa, and similarly distant places.

Table 1.

#### Breakdown of Returns by Area

Chicago area	2,409	(80.3%)
Milwaukee area	92	( 3.1%)
Fringe area	489	(16.3%)
Other	10	( 0.3%)
<hr/>		
TOTAL	3,000	(100%)

From these figures, it is evident that the number of cards received from the Milwaukee area (and the Other category) is, in each case, too small to provide an adequate sample from which to generalize. The scanty proportion from the Milwaukee area indicates that the mailing did not adequately sample this area, and inquiry revealed that only about 2,500 cards (from the 100,000 total mailing) were sent to Milwaukee.

The comparisons to be made are between the Chicago area and the Fringe area. Here we find the differences much as would expect, with the viewers in the metropolitan area being more interested in paying for the reception they get than the viewers in the fringe area.

**FIGURE 3.**  
**RESPONSES TO THE TWO QUESTIONS**  
**TOTAL RETURN**  
**N = 25,669**

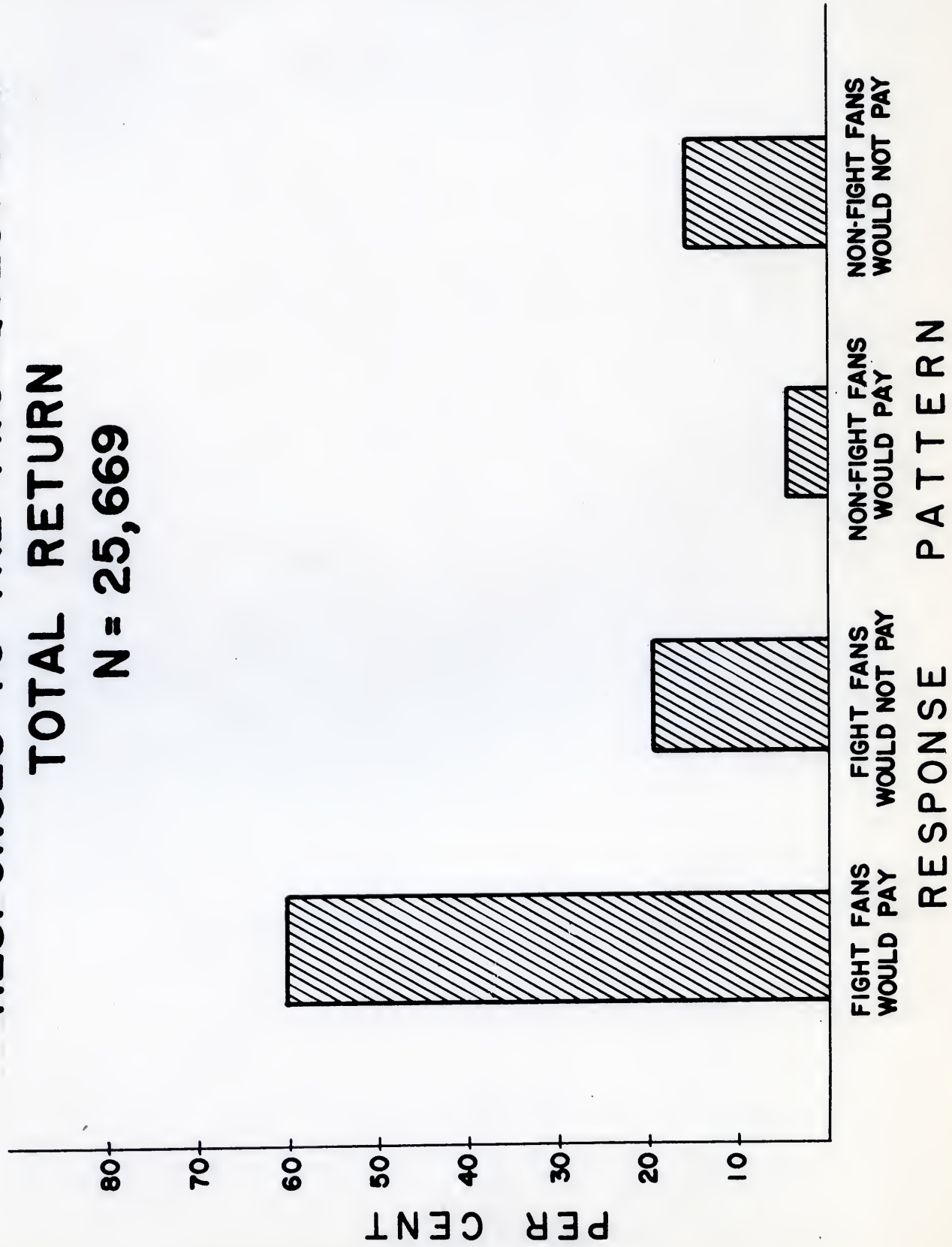


Table 2

Responses by Area, Sample of 3,000

	TOTAL SAMPLE	CHICAGO AREA	FRINGE AREA
Fight fans	2,394 (79.8%)	1,928 (80.0%)	374 (76.5%)
Total willing to pay	1,941 (64.7%)	1,660 (68.9%)	231 (47.3%)

Statistical tests have been made to determine whether the differences between the Chicago area and the Fringe area on these two questions are real differences or attributable to chance sampling error. Conclusions are as follows:

1. The percentage of persons saying that they are fight fans does not differ significantly between the two areas; while 80.0% of the Chicago respondents say they are fight fans, as compared with 76.5% of the Fringe area respondents, this difference may be attributed to chance sampling deviations and is not sufficiently large to be regarded as a "real" difference.
2. The difference in willingness to pay \$1.00 to see a championship fight is definitely a statistically significant or real difference. While 68.9% of the Chicago respondents were willing to pay, only 47.3% of the Fringe area viewers indicated their willingness to pay. A difference this large could occur by chance less than one time out of a million; we therefore conclude that it is a real difference.



Table 1

SUMMARY OF DAILY RETURNS AND TOTAL RESPONSE  
TV FIGHT POLL BY THE PURDUE OPINION PANEL

DAY	DATE	CARDS	#1 YES, #2 YES	#1 YES, #2 NO	#1 NO, #2 YES	#1 NO, #2 NO
1	5/13	1233	787 (63.8%)	190 (15.4%)	50 (4.1%)	206 (16.7%)
2	5/14	6807	4114 (60.9%)	1284 (18.9%)	283 (4.2%)	1094 (16.1%)
3	5/15	6584	4015 (61.0%)	1247 (18.9%)	271 (4.1%)	1051 (16.0%)
4	5/16	3353	1966 (58.6%)	689 (20.5%)	148 (4.4%)	550 (16.4%)
5	5/18	3433	2001 (58.2%)	741 (21.6%)	154 (4.5%)	537 (15.6%)
6	5/19	1445	892 (61.7%)	282 (19.5%)	73 (5.1%)	198 (13.7%)
7	5/20	835	496 (59.3%)	161 (19.3%)	38 (4.6%)	140 (16.8%)
8-9	5/21-22	881	519 (58.9%)	174 (19.8%)	53 (6.0%)	135 (15.3%)
10-13	5/23-27	738	443 (60.0%)	155 (21.0%)	39 (5.3%)	101 (13.7%)
14-16	5/28-30	360	212 (58.9%)	73 (20.3%)	21 (5.8%)	54 (15.0%)
TOTAL		25669	15477 (60.3%)	4996 (19.5%)	1130 (4.4%)	4066 (15.8%)



APPENDIX

Sample Double Postcard:

PURDUE OPINION PANEL  
"IMPORTANT TV SURVEY"

Fifty thousand fight fans saw the last Marciano-Walcott championship fight, September 23, 1952, by television in theatres, but twenty million TV set owners were unable to see this fight in their living rooms.

When Marciano meets Walcott May 15, it is at this time announced by the promoters, that Television set owners in Chicago and Milwaukee will not be able to see this fight in their homes. This may happen again with championship fights.

With this in mind, will you please answer the two questions on the attached card. Just drop it in the mail box. It needs no postage. Thank you.

H. H. Remmers  
Director, Purdue University  
Opinion Panel

- 
1. Are you a fight fan? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
2. If a pay-as-you-see television system were in operation, would you be willing to pay \$1.00 to see a championship fight on television in your home? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records  
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of  
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."



A collaboration among the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Communication Arts,  
and Wisconsin Historical Society.

Supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from  
the National Endowment for the Humanities



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